

-Legislative Hearing-

OPENING STATEMENT

September 19, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Gallego for calling today's hearing.

As you mentioned, the subcommittee will be receiving testimony today on four pieces of legislation.

H.R. 1312, the Yurok Lands Act, would transfer approximately 1,200 acres of Forest Service land and revise the reservation boundary which would encompass both federal and other tribal lands.

The bill would also increase the Yurok tribe's role in federal land management. I support this bill and the tribe's efforts to strengthen tribal governance.

I am also a cosponsor of our second bill, H.R. 3846. This bill expands legal protections against those who attempt to sell or export objects of tribal cultural patrimony. In recent years certain objects have appeared in foreign auction houses. Historically, tribes have an extremely difficult time having these items returned to them.

The hearing on this bill today is an important start to ensuring culturally significant items remain with tribes and not in the hands of foreign art dealers.

As a retired Marine and a member the House Armed Services Committee, I feel very strongly about our nation's veterans. I appreciate my colleague Mr. Khanna for introducing H.R. 4153. This legislation amends an oversight which excluded urban Indian health organizations from receiving reimbursements from the Veterans Administration.

The final bill on the agenda is S. 216. I want to thank the Spokane tribe for being here today and discussing why this bill is important to the tribe. I'm looking forward to hearing your testimony and learning more about this issue.

I want to thank our other witnesses for being here today and I am looking forward to hearing their testimonies as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.